

# **Town of Winchester Zoning Ordinance Compliance Guidelines**

## **Bufferyards and Landscaping**

The Winchester Town Board, Plan Commission, and zoning administrator will utilize these guidelines in determining whether to approve, approve with conditions, or deny any application under Chapter 17: Zoning of the Town Code including, but not necessarily limited to rezones, conditional use permits, and site plan permits. As such, the Town of Winchester Plan Commission recommends that all applicants for permits or approval under Chapter 17 consider these guidelines as they prepare their applications. These guidelines are relevant to the following zoning districts: R-4, R-8, B-1, B-2, B-3, I-1, I-2, and PDD.

### I. General Provisions.

#### A. Findings. The Town Board makes the following findings:

1. A healthy environment is an indication of a healthy community.
2. Landscaping helps to maintain and increase property values, which helps to protect public and private investment in a community.
3. Landscaping provides lasting social, economic, environmental, and aesthetic benefits to the community.
4. Landscaping helps to reduce the “heat-island” effect by shading parking lots, streets, and other hard-surfaced areas.
5. Flexible standards allow alternative design options that may better fit the needs of the landowner and that may be needed to address unique site characteristics.
6. Landscaped buffers are needed between parcels of incompatible land uses, and as the degree of incompatibility increases, the amount of buffering (width and landscaping) should increase.
7. Xeriscape planting techniques help promote water and energy conservation.
8. A variety of landscape plants are needed to ensure that the effect of a single disease (e.g., Dutch elm disease) or pest (e.g., emerald ash borer) on landscape plants is minimized.

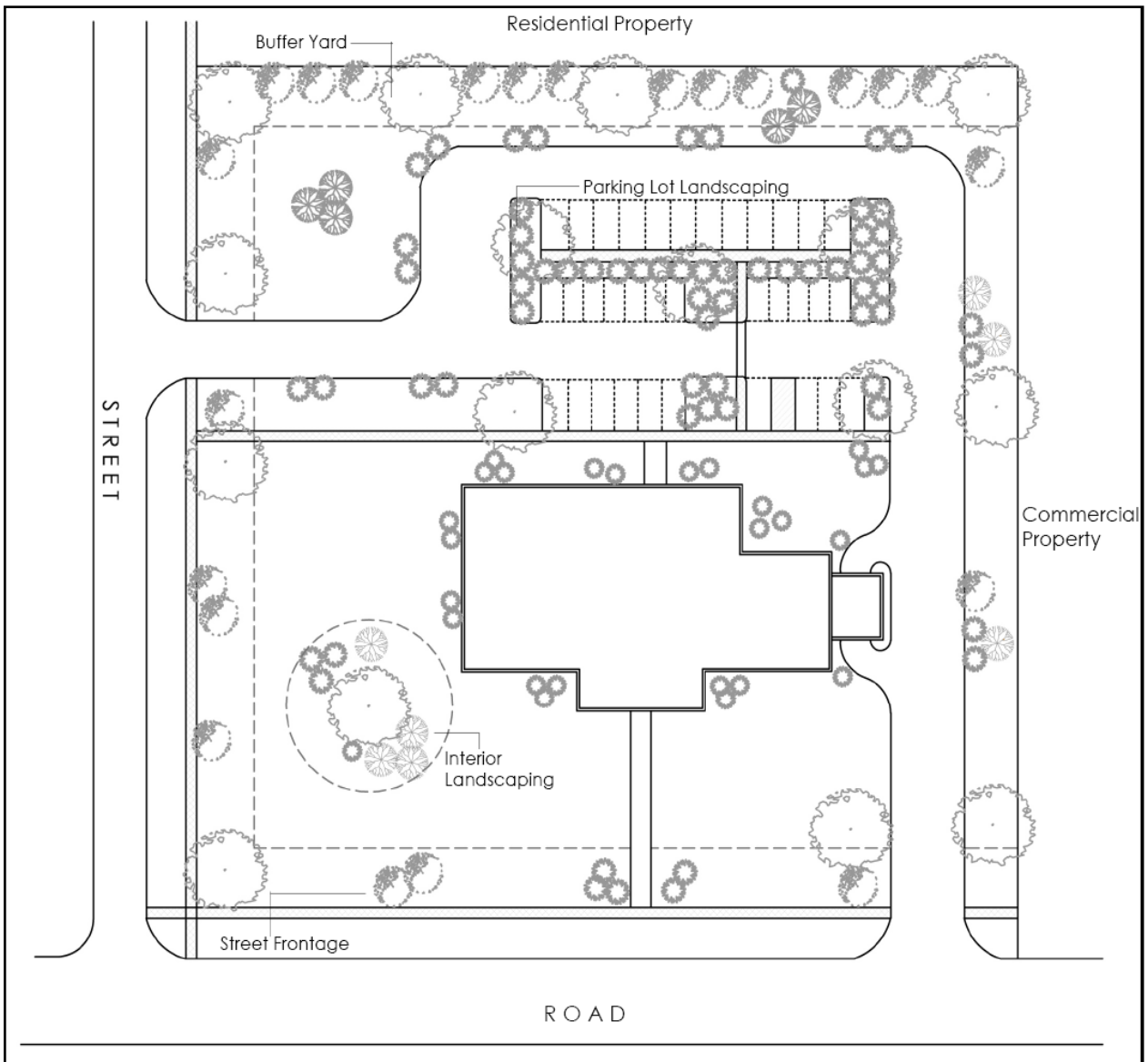
#### B. Purpose. These guidelines are established to promote the public health, safety, and welfare and is intended to accomplish the following purposes:

1. Make the developed areas of the Town more attractive and aesthetically pleasing.
2. Provide flexible standards where possible, rather than overly prescriptive requirements.
3. Promote and improve public health and safety through the abatement of noise, the glare of lights, dust, and air pollution.
4. Improve the aesthetic appearance of the built environment.
5. Ensure that land uses of different intensity have sufficient buffering between them to minimize negative effects.
6. Create aesthetically pleasing tree-lined streetscapes.
7. Promote economic development by providing a high quality of life.

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8. Enhance ambient environmental conditions by providing shade, air purification, oxygen regeneration, groundwater recharge, storm water runoff retardation, and noise, glare, and heat abatement.
  9. Encourage the preservation, expansion, protection, and proper maintenance of the community forest.
- C. General Applicability. The provisions of these guidelines apply to different areas as generally depicted in Exhibit 1 below.

Exhibit 1: General applicability of landscape requirements.



- D. Landscape Plan. A landscape plan shall consist of a completed worksheet as may be used by the zoning administrator and a plan view drawing that shows

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where the required plants will generally be planted. Such drawing shall be drawn at the same scale as the site plan drawing, if required.

### **E. Description of Landscape Points and Classification of Plant Species.**

1. Generally. The required level of landscape plants is stated in terms of landscape points. As shown in Exhibit 2, a different number of points are assigned to each of the plant categories depending upon its typical growth rate, its mature height, and whether it is a deciduous or evergreen species. Species generally suitable for use in central Wisconsin are listed and those native to the state are denoted.
2. Plants not listed. The species listed in Exhibit 2 are not meant to be exhaustive. Therefore, the Plan Commission shall review proposals for, and the applicability of, species not contained in this list, and is authorized to approve appropriate similar species.
3. Prohibited plants. The following species have been identified as invasive by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) due to their ability to invade wild areas, outcompete native species, degrade habitats, and potentially cause extensive ecological damage. These species are prohibited for use in all commercial, industrial, and residential site plans and landscaping plans in the Town of Winchester.

- a. Autumn olive
- b. Bigtooth aspen
- c. Birds-foot trefoil
- d. Buckthorn - common and glossy
- e. Crown vetch
- f. Dames rocket
- g. Gray dogwood
- h. Honeysuckle – Morrow, Tatarian, showy pink, and Amur
- i. Japanese barberry
- j. Maiden grass
- k. Norway maple
- l. Oriental bittersweet
- m. Purple loosestrife
- n. Red osier dogwood
- o. Reed canary grass
- p. Smooth sumac
- q. Staghorn sumac
- r. Wayfaring tree
- s. Yellow iris
- t. Any other species determined by the Town of Winchester, Winnebago County, or WDNR to be invasive and harmful to the economy and environment of the township.

### **F. Specifications for Landscaping Materials.**

1. Generally. All plant material shall be healthy, vigorous, and free of disease and insects.

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2. Minimum planting size. Trees and shrubs shall meet the minimum planting size established in Exhibit 3. Further, trees and shrubs shall meet the specifications contained in the most current edition of *American Standard for Nursery Stock* for the corresponding planting size.
3. Turf. Turf areas may be sodded or seeded. In areas subject to erosion, sod shall be used. Sod shall be commercially grown and clean and free of weeds, noxious pests, and diseases.
4. Mulch. Where mulch is used as a ground treatment, it shall be applied to a minimum depth of 4 inches. A landscape fabric may be placed between the soil and mulch to impede weed growth.

G. Credit for Preserving Existing Trees and Shrubs.

1. Generally. Landscape plantings as required by these guidelines may be satisfied in whole, or in part, by preserving existing trees and shrubs on the subject property.
2. Allocation of credits. An existing tree shall be credited based on its size as shown in Exhibit 5. An existing shrub shall be credited on a one-for-one basis regardless of size.
3. Location of trees and shrubs. A tree eligible for credit shall be located within 10 feet of a required buffer yard or parking lot to which the credit is to be applied or within the street terrace. A shrub eligible for credit shall be located within the area to which the credit is to be applied.
4. Condition of trees to be used as credit. In order to use an existing tree or shrub as credit, the following conditions shall be satisfied:
  - a. The area within the drip line or 6 feet away from the tree trunk, whichever is greater, shall be preserved in its natural state or covered with pervious landscape material and shall be retained at original grade with no trenching, cutting of any roots, or compaction of soil.
  - b. During construction, a temporary barrier shall be placed around the tree at the drip line or 6 feet away from the tree trunk, whichever is greater.

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Exhibit 2: Classification of plants.	
Botanical Name and Point Value	Common Name
Tall deciduous trees (30 points)	
<i>Acer</i> spp.	maple: red [1], silver [1], sugar [1]
<i>Fraxinus</i> spp.	ash [2]
<i>Ginkgo biloba</i>	ginkgo
<i>Gleditsia triacanthos</i>	honey locust [1]
<i>Quercus</i> spp.	oak: red [1], white [1], pin, bur [1]
<i>Tilia</i> spp.	linden: basswood [1], littleleaf, redmond
Medium deciduous trees (15 points)	
<i>Betula</i> spp.	birch: river [1], paper [1]
<i>Prunus</i> spp.	cherry: choke [1], pin [1]
<i>Salix</i> spp.	Willow
Low deciduous trees (10 points)	
<i>Acer ginnala</i>	amur maple
<i>Amelanchier</i> spp.	serviceberry
<i>Crataegus</i> spp.	hawthorn: cockspur [1], dotted [1], downy [1], Washington
<i>Malus</i> spp.	crabapple spp.
<i>Sorbus</i> spp.	mountainash: European, showy [1]
<i>Prunus americana</i>	American plum
Tall evergreen trees (40 points)	
<i>Abies concolor</i>	white fir
<i>Pinus</i> spp.	pine: red [1], white [1], Scots
<i>Tsuga canadensis</i>	Canada hemlock
Medium evergreen trees (20 points)	
<i>Thuja occidentalis</i>	American arborvitae
Low evergreen trees (12 points)	
<i>Juniperus</i> spp.	juniper: mountbatten, redcedar [1]
<i>Thuja</i> spp.	arborvitae: pyramidal, techny
Tall deciduous shrubs (5 points)	
<i>Cornus</i> spp.	dogwood: pagoda
<i>Syringa</i> spp.	lilac: Chinese, hyacinth
<i>Viburnum</i> spp.	viburnum: arrowwood, nannyberry [1]
Medium deciduous shrubs (3 points)	
<i>Corylus americana</i>	American filbert, hazelnut
<i>Cotoneaster</i> spp.	cotoneaster
<i>Forsythia</i> spp.	forsythia: border, early, weeping
<i>Rosa</i> spp.	rose: Virginia, rugosa
Low deciduous shrubs (1 point)	
<i>Spirea</i> spp.	spirea: froebel, snowmound
Medium evergreen shrubs (5 points)	
<i>Juniperus chinensis</i>	juniper: Pfitzer
<i>Taxus</i> spp.	yew: Japanese
Low evergreen shrubs (3 points)	
<i>Juniperus</i> spp.	juniper: sargent, creeping, andorra
Notes:	
1. This species is native to Wisconsin.	
2. Only those species that are not susceptible to the emerald ash borer may be used	

- c. The existing stock shall not be damaged from skinning, barking, and the like.
- d. The existing stock shall be healthy and free from disease, damage, and active insect infestation potentially lethal to the tree.

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- e. The species is one of the plant species listed in Exhibit 2.

### H. General Design and Placement Guidelines.

1. Random placement. To the extent possible, plants shall be randomly placed so as to give a natural appearance.
2. Planting beds. Where required, shrubs shall be placed in planting beds with mulch.
3. Proximity to specified features. Trees and shrubs shall be separated from driveways, fire hydrants, utility poles, and utility pedestals and cabinets as listed in Exhibit 5.
4. Proximity to overhead utility lines and the like. Trees and shrubs shall not be placed where they will require frequent pruning in order to avoid interference with overhead utility lines, buildings, or other structures.
5. Within vision clearance triangle. Landscaping within a vision clearance triangle shall be consistent with Town road standards.
6. Integration with natural amenities. When a site abuts a natural amenity such as a stream, park, or other open space, the landscape plan shall integrate with, and respect the natural integrity of the amenity.
7. Integration with stormwater facilities. Detention and retention ponds shall be designed to be physically, functionally, and visually integrated into adjacent landscape areas.

### I. Plant Diversity.

1. Tree species. The maximum number of required trees in the same genus shall comply with the proportions established in Exhibit 6. For example, if three tree species are required, a species in three different genres must be used (e.g., *Quercus* - oaks, *Acer* - maples, *Pinus* - pines).
2. Shrub species. It is recommended that the proportion of required shrubs and ground cover follow the standards established in Exhibit 6, except that different species within the same genus may be used.

### J. Maintenance.

Exhibit 3: Minimum planting size.	
Plant Category	Minimum Planting Size
<b>Tree</b>	
Tall deciduous tree	1½" caliper
Medium deciduous tree	1" caliper
Low deciduous tree	¾" caliper
Tall evergreen tree	5' tall
Medium evergreen tree	4' tall
Low evergreen tree	3' tall
<b>Shrub</b>	
Tall deciduous shrub	36" tall
Medium deciduous shrub	24" tall
Low deciduous shrub	18" tall
Tall evergreen shrub	24" tall
Medium evergreen shrub	18" tall
Low evergreen shrub	12" tall

Exhibit 4: Allowable tree credits.	
Caliper of Existing Tree	Number of Trees Credited
2 inches up to 6 inches	1
6 inches up to 12 inches	2
12 inches up to 16 inches	3
16 inches and greater	4

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1. Generally. All landscaping shall be maintained in good condition so as to present a healthy, neat, and orderly appearance, free from refuse, weeds, and debris.
2. Responsibilities. The current landowner shall be responsible for maintaining the vegetation, irrigation system, screening devices, and other landscape components as identified in these guidelines and as require in Chapter 17 of the Town Code.
3. Maintenance practices. Maintenance shall consist of regular and normal maintenance practices of landscaping including weeding, irrigation, fertilizing, pruning, and mowing. Plant materials that exhibit significant levels of insects, pests, diseases, or damage shall be treated as appropriate.
4. Replacement, generally. Plant materials which were planted as required by these guidelines or which were used as a credit and which die or are irreparably damaged shall be removed and replaced with living plant materials consistent with the approved landscape plan or as required by these guidelines.
5. Replacement following a natural disaster. Plant materials that were planted as required by these guidelines or which were used as a credit and which die or are irreparably damaged due to a natural disaster, such as area-wide flooding or high wind, shall, within 2 years of such event, be removed and replaced with plant materials consistent with the approved landscape plan or as required by these guidelines. With just cause, the Plan Commission may on a case-by-case basis grant an extension of 2 additional years upon written request, or pass a resolution granting a blanket extension to all affected properties in the Town.
6. Staking. It is recommended that stakes and cables used to support a tree be removed within 24 months of planting.

Exhibit 5: Minimum separation from specified objects.		
	Tree	Shrub
Driveway	10'	6'
Fire hydrant	8'	6'
Utility pole	20'	6'
Utility cabinet and pedestal	8'	6'

### K. Specifications for a Berm.

1. Maximum slope and form. In order to facilitate maintenance and efficient irrigation water usage, a berm shall not exceed a slope of 3:1 (i.e., for every 3 feet of horizontal run the vertical height is one foot). A berm shall be graded to appear as a curvilinear, naturalistic form.
2. Construction. A berm shall be compacted during the construction process so as to minimize settling.
3. Stabilization. A berm shall be covered with turf or mulch along with required plant materials.
4. Effect on stormwater flow. A berm may not be designed or placed so as to divert the normal flow of stormwater to the detriment of surrounding properties.
5. Placement with respect to existing trees and shrubs. No portion of a berm shall be placed within the root zone of an existing tree or shrub if doing so could compromise the health of such tree or shrub.

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- 6. Placement within vision clearance triangle. Placement of a berm within a vision clearance triangle shall be consistent with Town road standards.

Exhibit 6. Plant diversity requirements and recommendations		
Required Number of Plants	Maximum Proportion of Tree Species in Same Genus	Recommended Proportion of Same Species for Shrubs
11 to 20	40%	35%
21 to 30	35%	30%
31 to 40	30%	25%
41 to 50	25%	20%
51 and more	20%	15%

- L. The use of low-water-adaptive vegetation should be incorporated into landscape designs to the extent possible. When the total amount of landscaping in a project, excluding terrace areas, exceeds 5,000 square feet, at least 30 percent of the required vegetation shall be low-water-adaptive vegetation and planted in one or more groupings.

**II. Buffer Yard.**

- A. General Description. A buffer yard consists of a strip of undeveloped land with landscaping or other visual screening and is intended to provide a physical and visual separation between two incompatible land uses.

**B. Applicability.**

1. Generally. A buffer yard shall be required at the time of development along the side and rear lot lines of the lot being developed when it abuts another lot in a different zoning district and when the lot being developed was:
  - a. Created by a land division of any type approved after the effective date of Chapter 17; or,
  - b. Rezoned to another zoning classification after the effective date of Chapter 17.
2. Conditional use. As a condition of approving a conditional use, the Plan Commission may require that a buffer yard be incorporated into the project's overall design. The standard imposed shall be based on the degree of incompatibility between the adjoining use and the conditional use.
3. Dual responsibility. When two adjoining parcels are vacant and they are located in different zoning districts, one half of the required buffer yard shall be located on each parcel (i.e., one half of the required width and one half of the required plants).
4. Single responsibility. When a vacant parcel adjoins a developed parcel and each are located in different zoning districts, the buffer yard shall be located on the vacant parcel.

**C. General Provisions.**

1. Relationship of fencing and plantings. When a fence or berm is used in conjunction with plantings, one-half of the required number of landscape points shall be planted between the fence or berm and the property line.



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2. Use of buffer yard.
  - a. A buffer yard shall be undeveloped, except that the zoning administrator may allow the following in a buffer yard:
    - An unpaved fire lane.
    - Utility boxes and cabinets when necessary.
    - A paved bicycle/pedestrian path or a paved sidewalk when necessary to allow for proper on-site and off-site pedestrian circulation.
    - A paved vehicular access between the adjoining parcels provided it is located in the least intrusive location and is located generally perpendicular to the property boundary line.
    - Stormwater management facilities.
    - Other structures and features deemed compatible by the Plan Commission.
    - If a utility easement is located along the property boundary line where a buffer yard is also required, the width of the easement may be used to satisfy the width requirement of the buffer yard, in whole or in part, provided none of the required landscaping and/or fencing is located within the utility easement.
  - b. Multi-use developments and mixed use. For multi-use developments on a single lot, the use nearest the property line shall determine the buffer yard requirement for that area. For mixed uses (two or more uses in the same structure), the higher intensity use shall be used to determine the buffer yard requirement.
  - c. Recordation of easement. The buffer yard shall be shown on the face of the final plat or certified survey map (CSM) with the following narrative:
    - “The buffer yard(s) shown on the face of this [plat /certified survey map] was established to comply with Chapter 17 of the Town Code in effect at the time of approval. A buffer yard shall not be developed or used, except in conformance with Chapter 17, and the property owner shall be responsible for maintaining a level of landscaping that meets the buffer yard requirements in effect at the time of filing of this [plat /certified survey map]. This buffer yard may only be removed by the Plan Commission.”
  - d. Longevity. Buffer yards shall be maintained in perpetuity. However, the Plan Commission may terminate a buffer yard when:
    - The parcel containing the buffer yard is rezoned to the same zoning classification as the adjoining parcel; or,
    - When the adjoining parcel is rezoned to the same zoning classification as the parcel with the buffer yard. Such termination shall reference the original document depicting the buffer yard and be recorded with the register of deeds for Winnebago County.
  - e. Ownership. When a buffer yard is required in a subdivision, it shall be held in common by a homeowners association or shall be incorporated into the adjoining lots.

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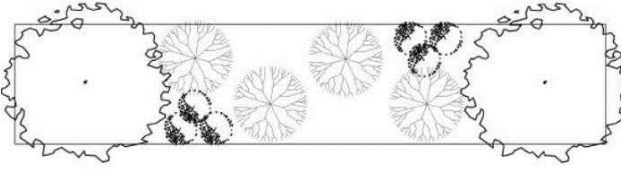
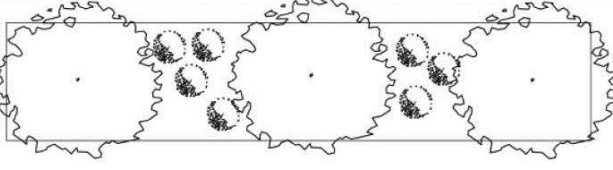
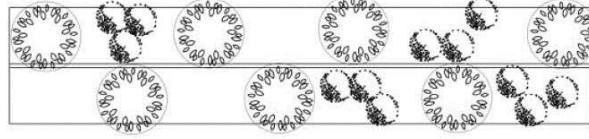
D. Determination of Required Buffer Yard. The determination of a buffer yard requirement is a two-step process as follows:

1. Identification of required buffer yard standard. The required buffer yard standard is first determined using Exhibit 7. First determine which of the two zoning districts allows the most intense development. Next, find that zoning designation at the top of the table and then move down the column to the cell where the zoning designation of the other district intersects. If a buffer yard is required, a letter will be shown in that cell.
2. Identification of detailed buffer yard requirements. In the next step, the developer chooses how the required standard will be met. For each standard, a variety of width, landscaping point, berm, and fence combinations are possible as listed in Exhibit 8. The requirements shall be provided for each 100 feet or fraction thereof. Different landscaping point options may be used along the length of a buffer yard, provided no such segment is less than 100 feet.

Exhibit 7: Standards for a buffer yard between different zoning districts.											
Other Zoning District						Zoning District Allowing the Greatest Intensity or Density					
R-1	R-2	R-3	R-4	R-6	R-8	B-1	B-2	B-3	M-1	I-1	I-2
R-1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	A	-	C	D
R-2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	A	-	C	D
R-3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	A	-	C	D
R-4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	B	-	C	D
R-6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	B	-	C	D
R-8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	B	-	C	D
B-1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	B	C
B-2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	A	B
B-3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	A
M-1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	B	B
I-1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
I-2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Notes: 1. A dash “-” means that a buffer yard is not required. 2. For A, B, C, and D see Exhibit 8 for the width of the buffer yard and related landscaping requirements.											

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Exhibit 8: Detailed buffer yard requirements.

A	Width	Points per 100 Feet	Required Fence or Berm [1]	Example Schematic [2]
A-1	10'	200	-	
A-2	15'	150	-	
A-3	20'	125	-	
<b>B</b>				
B-1	15'	100	Fence [3,4,5]	
B-2	15'	300	-	
B-3	20'	200	-	
B-4	25'	150	-	
B-5	30'	125	-	
<b>C</b>				
C-1	15'	100	Fence [3,4,5]	
C-2	15'	350	-	
C-3	20'	250	-	
C-4	25'	200	-	
C-5	30'	175	-	
C-6	30'	125	4' berm	
<b>D</b>				
D-1	20'	200	Fence [3,4,5]	
D-2	25'	325	-	
D-3	30'	275	-	
D-4	35'	250	-	
D-5	40'	200	-	
D-6	40'	150	4' berm	

**Exhibit 8 Notes:**

1. A dash "-" means not applicable
2. All schematics are intended to be illustrative.
- 3 Maximum height allowed per Section 23.8-452
4. When a fence is used, at least 50 percent of the required plant materials shall be located on the exterior side (the side away from the center of the subject property) of the fence. If at the time of development, there is a fence on the adjoining property, this planting requirement shall not apply.
5. When a fence is used to enclose an activity or storage area, a fence may not be used in the buffer yard.

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III. Landscaping.

A. Applicability. The provisions of this division apply to the following:

1. Construction of a principal building within an applicable zoning district.
2. Expansion of a principal building that is subject to these guidelines when such expansion is by 500 square feet or more.
3. Construction or expansion of a parking area.

B. Street frontage landscape requirements.

1. Minimum amount required. A minimum of 60 landscape points shall be provided along a public street right-of-way on a prorated basis for every 100 linear feet of frontage.
2. Placement on lot. Plants required by this section shall be located within 10 feet of the public right-of-way. In no instance shall such landscaping be located within a public right-of-way.
3. Use of various plant types. Shrubs shall not be used to meet this requirement. A minimum of 50 percent of the required landscape points shall be devoted to tall deciduous trees and a minimum of 30 percent of the points shall be devoted to medium deciduous trees.

C. Building foundation landscape requirements.

1. Minimum amount required. A minimum of 40 landscape points shall be provided on a prorated basis for every 100 feet of building foundation perimeter. For example, a building with a perimeter of 180 feet must provide a minimum of 72 landscape points  $((180/100)*40)=72$ .
2. Placement on lot. Plants required by this section shall be placed so that, at maturity, the dripline of each plant is generally located within 10 feet of the building foundation. As a general rule, plants shall be distributed around the entire perimeter of the building. Such landscaping shall not be located in those areas required for landscaping as street frontages or parking areas.
3. Use of various plant types. Climax trees and tall trees shall not be used to meet building foundation landscape requirements. The intent of this section is to require a visual break in the mass of buildings and to require a visual screen of a minimum of 6 feet in height for all exterior perimeter appurtenances, such as ground-mounted HVAC units and utility boxes.
4. Anticipated future development. Where an approved site plan depicts a future building extension, the foundation landscaping requirement shall be calculated by measuring the length of the total perimeter. However, foundation plantings need only be installed based on the landscape points calculated from the portions of the building perimeter that will not be affected by building extension. If this results in point requirements which are not met through the initial planting, then such requirement shall be met within 5 years of building permit issuance, or as extended in writing by the Plan Commission.

D. Parking lot landscape requirements.

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1. Minimum amount required. A minimum of 120 landscape points shall be provided on a prorated basis for every 10,000 square feet of paved area. For example, a minimum of 303 landscape points are required within a parking area consisting of 25,200 square feet (approximately 63 stalls) as follows:  $((25,200/10,000)*120)=303$ .
  2. Use of various plant types. A minimum of 60 percent of all landscape points shall be devoted to tall trees and a minimum of 20 percent of all points shall be devoted to shrubs.
  3. Placement within a landscaped area. A minimum of 325 square feet of landscaped area shall be located within the perimeter of the paved area for the placement of every 100 landscape points, or fraction thereof.
  4. Bioretention areas. Bioretention areas that are used to treat stormwater runoff from parking areas should be integrated into landscape areas as may be required in this section.
- E. Lot interior landscape requirements.
1. Minimum amount required. A minimum of 10 landscape points shall be provided within the interior of the lot on a prorated basis for every 1,000 square feet of building floor area. For example, a minimum of 23 landscape points are required on the interior of a lot having a building floor area of 2,300 square feet  $((2,300/1,000)*10)=23$ .
  2. Placement on lot. Plants required by this section shall be located away from required landscaping for building foundations, street frontages, and parking lot areas.